Volume 22 | Issue 2 Article 3

1960

Veterinary Inspection at Public Stockyards

Fred C. Mau

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Fred C. Mau, D.V.M.

THERE ARE OVER 63 MILLION HEAD of livestock that require veterinary inspection as they pass through the public stockyards over the country. It is the job of the veterinary inspector to take a professional interest in every cow, pig, sheep or steer that enters the gates of these yards by truck, train or trailer.

It is the responsibility of government, both Federal and State, to prevent the spread of disease within and between the various states. How well they succeed often depends upon us. In order to carry out an effective program to prevent the spread and to eradicate these livestock diseases, animal disease control officials must know where and when these diseases occur. The ideal method would be routine inspection of all premises where livestock is raised. Since this is an impossible task they take the second-best course and rely on veterinary inspection by us at the stockyards, along with mortality and morbidity reports submitted by field practitioners. Modern space age transportation has placed a premium on this type of inspection as a means of preventing the spread of livestock disease.

Dr. Fred Mau is Inspector in Charge of the Chicago Livestock Yards.

The type of inspection provided at the stockyards also assures customers that they are receiving healthy livestock that is getting a high quality veterinary inspection. This in turn helps to ensure that the public is getting a high quality of meat from healthy animals.

At the Chicago stockyards, there are five veterinarians and 15 livestock inspectors. These men must handle an estimated five million animals a year.

The livestock inspectors are specially trained laymen who help the veterinarian in a variety of ways. Gathering information, restraining animals and supervision of cleaning and disinfection after disease is discovered are typical examples of the type of help they provide. These livestock inspectors are divided into groups with a veterinarian in charge of each group. Each group has responsibility for inspection and examination in a given section of the stockyards.

The duties of the veterinary inspector include such things as inspection of all animals that enter the yards, isolation and quarantine procedures for diseased animals, treatment of diseased animals, immunization of animals, collection and examination of pathological specimens, writing pathological reports, and reporting

of disease to federal and state disease control officials.

These veterinarians must also handle reactors to tests for tuberculosis, paratuberculosis and brucellosis. It is their job to identify and record the reactor tag numbers, and in some instances help in the post mortem examination of the carcasses. If a non-reactor animal is found infected with tuberculosis when slaughtered, the veterinarian assists in tracing the animal back to the farm where it came from. They must also supervise the tuberculosis or brucellosis testing of replacement cattle.

An example of the value of a stockyards veterinarian in disease control was seen a few years ago when the sudden epidemic of vesicular exanthema threatened the swine industry. It was through the alertness of a veterinary inspector assigned to one of the major markets that the disease was first spotted. Although it was a big undertaking to get the disease under control and to eradicate it, much of the success of the eradication program was due to the effort of the Federal veterinarians assigned to stockyards, and their close association with the State and Federal officials located in the market area.

The work of the veterinarian in the public stockyards can and does provide a real challenge. Just how much of a challenge it is, is perhaps best shown by the wide range of diseases and the total numbers of livestock in which these diseases were found during the first six months of 1958 as indicated in the accompanying table.

ANIMAL DISEASES AT PUBLIC STOCKYARDS
(period January 1 to June 30, 1958)

DISEASE	CATTLE	SHEEP AND GOATS	SWINE
Actinomycosis or Actinobacillosis	14,215	24	19
Anaplasmosis	138	—	—
Anthrax	—	—	2
Arthritis	1,112	156	32,994
Atrophic Rhinitis	—	—	44,666
Brucellosis Reactors	62,079	—	3
Contagious Ecthyma	—	412	—
Edema Disease (Gut Edema)	—	—	1
Enteritis	106	2	557
Enterotoxemia	—	235	—
Epithelioma (Cancer Eye)	14,425	—	1
Erysipelas	—	—	1,956
Foot Rot	925	5,041	38
Hog Cholera	—	—	378
Infectious Bovine Rhinotracheitis	10	—	—
Infectious Keratitis (Pinkeye)	6,404	34	—
Influenza	—	—	799
Leptospirosis	1	—	30
Listeriosis (Listerellosis)	11	2	1
Malignant Catarrh (Malignant Catarrhal Fever)	5	—	—
Mange (Chorioptic)	9	1	—
Mange (Demodectic)	—	—	12
Mange (Sarcoptic)	—	—	2,255
Mastitis	21,451	2,162	66
Metritis	888	23	122
Mucosal Disease	3	—	—
Mycotic Stomatitis	1	—	—
Necrotic Enteritis	—	—	241
Paratuberculosis Reactors (Johne's Disease)	51	—	—
Pasteurellosis (Hemorrhagic Septicemia)	2,512	152	31
Pneumonia	1,153	554	1,178
Rabies	1	—	—
Ringworm	3,474	1	1
Scabies (Psoroptic mange)	—	7,783	—
Screwworm Infestation	246	17	3
Tuberculosis Reactors	6,010	—	2
TOTALS	135,230	16,599	85,356

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